DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 408 420 CS 509 518

AUTHOR Zoch, Lynn M.; And Others
TITLE The School Public Relations Practitioner: Educator or Outlaw?
PUB DATE Nov 96
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (82nd, San Diego, CA, November 23-26, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Measures; Elementary Secondary Education; Mail Surveys; Occupational Surveys; *Public Relations; Questionnaires; School Districts; School Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Practitioners; *Professional Concerns; Survey Research

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted which focused on public relations practitioners in school districts in a southern state. It used survey research to investigate several questions relating to public relations role enactment, hierarchical level of the public relations function, salary, job satisfaction, and encroachment into public relations. Questionnaires were sent to all 91 school districts in the state, with 67 returned of which 64 were usable, for a response rate of 69%. Results indicated that school public relations practitioners fulfill both the manager and technician roles equally, although it is responsibilities relating to the management function that seem to provide the most satisfaction. Women tend to be less active in the manager role. The public relations function reports directly to the school superintendent. There is a relationship between sex and salary in school district public relations and, with women, experience is negatively correlated with salary. Finally, there is a high level of encroachment into the public relations function in school districts. (Contains 36 references.) (Author/NKA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 408 636

The School Public Relations Practitioner: Indicator or Outlier?

Lynn M. Zoch
Assistant Professor
(803)777-3314
LMZoch at SC.EDU

Deborah L. Olson
Graduate Student

College of Journalism and Mass Communications
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208

Beth S. Patterson
Staff Writer
School District 5 of Lexington & Richland Counties

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Zoch
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Paper presented to the Public Relations Division
Speech Communication Association, 1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The School Public Relations Practitioner: Indicator or Outlier?

Abstract

A study was conducted which focuses on public relations practitioners in school districts in a southern state. The study utilized survey research to investigate several questions relating to public relations role enactment, hierarchical level of the public relations function, salary, job satisfaction and encroachment into public relations. The research found that school public relations practitioners fulfill both the manager and technician roles equally, although it is responsibilities relating to the management function that provide the most satisfaction. Women tend to be less active in the manager role. The public relations function reports directly to the school superintendent. There is a relationship between sex and salary in school district public relations and, with women, experience is negatively correlated with salary. Finally, there is a high level of encroachment into the public relations function in school districts.

Introduction

Most readers of local newspapers are aware that funding for education is under siege in this country. From national cutbacks in student loans and grants, to local referendums which at best maintain, and sometimes reduce, allocations to school districts, our educational system is being asked to do more with less. Public relations practitioners in educational settings are not immune to this nationwide trend. Neither are they immune to overall trends in public relations as a field -- the increasing number of women in public relations (a trend perhaps more apparent in public education, which has traditionally been a field dominated by women), the lower salaries paid to women public relations practitioners, encroachment into the field by those with no training in public relations, and the greater likelihood that women will work as public relations "technicians" rather than public relations "managers."

This exploratory study looks at public relations practitioners in school districts in a southern state. Several areas of interest were addressed in this study, which is intended to help build hypotheses for further research. The study investigates whether public relations practitioners in school districts are more likely to take on the role of the manager or the technician, and if the enactment of either role is affected by the sex of the practitioner. Encroachment into the public relations function, autonomy and placement of the public relations practitioner within the district hierarchy, communication responsibilities and job satisfaction also were investigated.

Review of the Literature

For this study, previous research which describes the tasks and responsibilities separating public relations management from the technical role was

important to determine the role enacted by the school public relations specialist. Germinal work by Broom and Smith (1979; 1978) and Broom (1982) form the basis for roles theory in public relations. Findings that the original three management roles (expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator) identified in these early studies were highly intercorrelated (Broom, 1982) led to later work by Broom and Dozier (1985; 1986), Dozier (1983; 1986; 1987) and Brody (1985) who conceptualized the two roles of manager and technician used in the current research. Childers (1986) and Ferguson (1987) found the most significant distinction between these two roles to be that managers have the power of decision-making, while technicians do not. However, Creedon (1989) asserted that the role of technician cannot always be so simply defined, and that it may involve decision making. A study by Reagan, et al. (1990), again verified a two role dichotomy in the public relations as a whole -- that of manager and technician.

Does this same dichotomy exist in school public relations? Educational public relations specialists have traditionally been known as "primarily . . . dispenser[s] of information" whose principle task is to inform and publicize (West, 1985, p. 60-62). In a study by Genzer (1993), school public relations directors' most frequent activities were producing newsletters, writing news releases and communicating with the media. Thus, school practitioners would appear to enact the role of a public relations technician, with their jobs focusing on producing communication materials: writing, editing and working with the media. Appearances may be deceiving however, since other studies have shown that school public relations practitioners frequently report directly to the superintendent of schools and are on the superintendent's management team. A study by Gainey (1985, p. 74) indicates that major responsibilities also include organizing the total public relations program, budgeting and planning and providing public relations counsel to the

superintendent and others within the school system. Even considering Creedon's outlook on the technician's role, the role indicated in Gainey's study matches most closely that identified as a public relations manager (Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

A growing trend, however, may cause school public relations practitioners to lose the opportunity for such management-oriented positions. School districts frequently combine the public relations function with other functions such as continuing education, transportation, personnel services, counseling and student services, and various secretarial and administrative jobs (Gainey, 1985, p. 46-47). Often when this happens, the public relations responsibilities are assigned to personnel with no training or background in public relations. This mixing of functions, while it fits into the "do more with less" philosophy, would seem to lend support to recent research in other types of organizations that shows encroachment into the public relations role (Dozier, 1988; Lauzen, 1990; 1992). Encroachment takes place when non-public relations professionals are assigned to take on the senior public relations role in an organization. In such cases public relations is relegated to a technical or supporting function and is no longer itself considered an integral management function. The current study looks at whether encroachment is actually taking place in educational public relations. If the districts have "joined" public relations with another function simply in order to "do more with less," the impact would likely be to make the overall public relations function within the school district less important and less effective.

It is generally accepted by theorists and practitioners alike that successful public relations in any organization requires the practitioner to participate in management decision making (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Thus, the hierarchical level at which the public relations function is assigned is important to its success. The individual heading up the public relations function in a specific organization must

be part of the management team, or at the very least have direct access to decision makers. In a study of public schools in Wisconsin, Keiser (1994) found that superintendents' involvement in the development of public relations' programs and their interaction with public relations staff was critical to the effectiveness of school public relations. And in a nationwide study, school public relations practitioners reported that having access to the superintendent helped them to be more effective (Genzer, 1993). Thus the current study looks at school public relations practitioners' access to the superintendent of the district and analyzes the practitioners' level of involvement in decision-making.

The increasing proportion of women in public relations over the last few decades has precipitated a parallel increase in research and commentary on the ramifications to the profession. The number of public relations practitioners who are female rose from 25% in 1968 (Cutlip, Center and Broom, 1985) to 66% in 1992 (PRSA "Seventh Annual Salary Survey," 1992).

In a study examining changes in the management role over the 12 year period of 1979 to 1991, Dozier and Broom found that male public relations practitioners enacting the management role outnumbered females significantly in 1979, but that by 1991 this discrepancy had shrunk to an insignificant level (Dozier and Broom, 1995). However, a 1996 study found that men still report a higher level of involvement in the management role than women and that women perceive impediment to their professional advancement in public relations (Lariscy, Sallot and Cameron, 1996). This same study reported a continuing perception that women in public relations earn less than their male counterparts and, indeed, the 1992 PRSA "Seventh Annual Salary Survey" reports the overall median salary for men in public relations, $57,766, is 47% more than for women, $39,207.

Unlike public relations, education has long been a female dominated profession. In 1993 71.3% of teachers at the elementary and secondary level were

women, yet only 34.9% of school principals, a management role, were women (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1993). Although their management role was not investigated in his study, Lyster (1994) found 68.9% of school public relations practitioners to be women. This percentage is almost identical to the 1992 PRSA findings. The researchers felt that similar concerns regarding the management role of women can be raised for both education and public relations.

Finally, the study explores factors contributing to job satisfaction among school public relations practitioners. Research by Pincus (1986) showed that not only superior- subordinate communication, but also receipt of communication by employees from top management, is positively related to satisfaction. Further, recent research relating directly to school public relations has shown that educational level and salary had significant positive effects on school public relations practitioners' general job satisfaction (Selladurai, 1993).

Research Questions. This literature led to the following questions for the current study:

Question 1 - Are school public relations practitioners in this state more likely to act in the manager or the technician role?

Question 2 - Is there a relationship between the sex of the school public relations practitioner and the role which he or she enacts?

Question 3 - Is there a relationship between the sex of the school pubic relations practitioner and salary?

Question 4 - At what level in the district hierarchy is the public relations function generally placed?

Question 5 - What factors contribute to school public relations practitioners satisfaction with their jobs?

Question 6 - Is encroachment into the public relations function taking place?

Methods

Survey. The researchers determined that surveying school public relations practitioners would be the best method to address these questions. Questionnaires were mailed to all 91 school districts in the state. Using a current state directory of public schools, the researchers sent surveys to the head of the public relations function when that person was known. In cases where it was not known if a school district had an individual in the public relations role, the questionnaire was sent to the superintendent's office.

The mailing consisted of the survey instrument with a cover letter briefly explaining the purpose of the study, and a postage-paid reply envelope. In the letter the researchers also offered to send respondents a copy of the results of the study. There was no follow-up mailing. Forty-seven questionnaires were returned. Of that number three were found to be unusable because "the position has been eliminated" or "we have no PR person." With 44 usable questionnaires the response rate was 48%.

Question Formulation and Pretest. Questions for the survey which related to satisfaction, autonomy and responsibility were developed with the help of two highly experienced school public relations practitioners. One of the practitioners is currently the Director of Community Services for a state school district, and the other is a former school public relations practitioner who is now a private consultant in educational public relations. Both are active members of the state chapter of the National School Public Relations Association. [Since not all school public relations practitioners are members, this roster could not be used as the research frame.]

The 11 questions about practitioner roles used in this study were adapted from those used by Dozier (1983) . The questionnaire also included general

demographic questions about the respondent and the school district.

The questionnaire was pretested for readability and meaning by the two practitioners mentioned earlier, in order not to subtract from the already small population of qualified respondents within the state.

Analysis. The completed questionnaires were analyzed using a PC program called "Number Crunching Statistical Software." While all respondents are included in this report, the number of responses for any one question does not always equal 44 because all respondents did not answer all questions.

Findings and Discussion

Profile of the Typical Respondent. A demographic profile of the modal school public relations practitioner in this state is a white (90.5%), 45-54 year old (42.9%) woman (61.9%) with a master's degree (23.8%) in education (47.6%). She is a native of the state (64%), makes between $35,000 and $39,999 (19%) and has no previous public relations experience (35.7%). She is the sole public relations practitioner in her school district (42.8%), holds the title of Public Information or Public Relations Director (35.7%), and is responsible for other duties besides public relations (75%).

Question 1. Are school public relations practitioners in this state more likely to act in the manager or the technician role?

Because of the low N for this exploratory research (44 usable responses from a population of 91) factor analysis of the roles questions was not indicated. Instead, means were computed for each of the 11 questions making up the overall roles index. Six questions addressed the manager role, and five questions addressed the technician role, with respondents being asked to answer "1" for Never and "5" for Always. Table 1 shows the findings for the questions about practitioner's roles.

Table 1
Practitioner Role Enactment

Questions indicating a manager orientation	Mean (s.d.)
I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's public relations program.	4.30 (1.05)
Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving public relations problems.	3.93 (1.10)
I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of public relations programs.	4.05 (1.14)
I make communications policy decisions.	3.57 (1.37)
In meetings with administrators, I often point out the need to follow a systematic public relations planning process.	3.73 (1.26)
I make public relations policy decisions.	3.61 (1.48)
Questions indicating a technician orientation	**Mean (s.d.)**
I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications.	3.95 (1.18)
I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials.	3.59 (1.23)
I do photography, graphics and/or desktop publishing for public relations materials.	3.07 (1.59)
I am the person who writes public relations materials presenting information on issues important to the organization.	4.07 (1.1)
I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization.	3.27 (1.23)

The overall mean for the manager index is 3.85 and for the technician index is 3.64.

Although the findings here contradict previous studies which found public relations practitioners generally enact either the manager or the technician role as their primary one, the finding that school public relations practitioners are not more likely to enact one role over the other was not surprising because the small size of the typical school public relations staff makes role distinctions less practical. The questionnaire included demographic questions which asked the number of people working either full or part-time in the district's communications or public relations department. Responses from those questions indicate that 77% (34) had no one else working with them in the public relations department. Sixteen of those respondents circled "0" as the number of people employed full-time in the public relations department, indicating they did not even consider themselves as full-time public relations practitioners.

The previous studies that found a clear dichotomy between the technician and manager roles were generally conducted using IABC or PRSA members. These organizations include a broad cross-section of public relations practitioners and may, in fact, include some school practitioners. However, studies of such a broad spectrum of practitioners do not reflect the specific circumstances of more specialized public relations fields, such as school public relations. The findings here, while exploratory and based on a small population, seem to indicate that school public relations is practiced in a less dichotomized way by those outside of these mainstream professional organizations.

Question 2 - Is there a relationship between the sex of the school public relations practitioner and the role which he or she enacts?

When means and a t-test were run by sex, the index showed a meaningful difference between the sexes for enactment of the managerial role but not for the

technician role.

Table 2
Manager Role Enactment by Sex

Questions indicating a manager orientation	Mean for Men (s.d.) n=16	Mean for Women(s.d.) n=26
I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's public relations program. (t=-2.59, p=.06)	4.81 (.54)	4.04 (1.11)
I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of public relations programs. (t=-2.6, p<.02)	4.63 (.5)	3.73 (1.31)
I make communications policy decisions. (t=-3.4, p<.005)	4.31 (1.14)	2.96 (1.31)
In meetings with administrators, I often point out the need to follow a systematic public relations planning process. (t=-2.54, p<.05)	4.31 (.79)	3.35 (1.38)
I make public relations policy decisions. (t=-2.3, p<.05)	4.25 (1.34)	3.19 (1.49)
Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving public relations problems. (n.s.)	4.12 (.98)	3.85 (1.19)

The summed mean for the manager index for men is 4.42 and for women is 3.52, and $t = -4.542$, $p < .005$.

The finding that there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of the technical role reflects the earlier discussion about the lack of staff in the public relations function. Within a school public relations office, the technical

part of the job -- writing and editing, preparing newsletters, brochures and other publications, doing photography and graphics -- must get done, as it must in any public relations department.

The greatest differences between men and women on the manager index appear to be in the areas of making policy decisions and strategic planning, areas in which other research has shown women are frequently less active than men (Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1988). While women public relations practitioners in the current study are certainly making these decisions (means of 2.96 to 3.35 are at the mid-point of the scale employed for these questions) they are making them less often than their male counterparts. Since these areas are essential to making the public relations function an integral part of management decision-making within the school district, the fact that women are less active in these areas indicates a gender-based inequity.

Question 3 - Is there a relationship between the sex of the school public relations practitioner and salary?

Chi square statistics showed a high level of significance ($p < .005$) when salary of the practitioners was cross-tabulated by sex. Only women (6) were making salaries under $25,000, and 46%(12) earned under $35,000. Of men, 87.5%(14) earned $35,000 or more, and nine earned more than $60,000. Even when the seven men who indicated they were either a superintendent or assistant superintendent are deleted, only men (2) earned $60,000 or more.

Since these findings were not unexpected given the salaries reported in the PRSA annual salary survey and works such as the 1986 Velvet Ghetto, and 1989 Beyond the Velvet Ghetto, we further examined these salary differences in light of educational level and experience. In this population of school public relations practitioners, correlations of salary and years of education were similar for men, .70,

and for women, .67. Generally, those with more education earned a higher salary. An interesting finding, however, was that the correlation of salary and years of experience in public relations was .24 for men, whereas for women there was a negative correlation of -.28. Ironically, in this study, the women with more work experience in public relations actually earned less on average than those with less experience.

There are several possibilities for this finding. In many publicly funded academic institutions individuals are hired at a very structured salary level -- the "going rate" at the time. Women have historically received approximately 75% of what a similarly qualified man would have been paid. As time passed, staff members received small cost of living increases but little else. Newer hires are brought in at the currently prevailing salary structure which is generally higher, thus establishing a situation of salary compression, where those with longer tenure at an institution make less than those who have been there a shorter time. The reason this is more of a problem for a woman than for a man is twofold -- women generally start at a lower salary than men, and women are less likely to leave a position for a better paying one in another, perhaps distant school district, if they are settled in a community with a family and employed spouse.

Question 4 - At what level in the district hierarchy is the public relations function generally placed in this state?

Overwhelmingly, the school public relations practitioner reported to the superintendent (66.7%) or assistant superintendent of schools (14.3%). Seven of the respondents were superintendents themselves, filling multiple roles for their district, and those individuals reported to the board of trustees (16.7%). Only one respondent indicated that he reported to someone lower in the district hierarchy than an assistant superintendent.

In addition, 77.6% of respondents checked yes to a statement worded "my input is often requested by administrators concerning school policies and/or programs and how they may affect the public and their beliefs about our district."

Most public school districts in this state are characterized by a multi-layered hierarchy. Smaller school districts typically employ fewer administrators who are required to function in multiple roles, while larger districts enable administrators to fill more specialized roles. At the top of the administrative structure (apart from "the public," "the district school board," and any other elements associated with the State Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Education) is the district superintendent. One or more assistant/associate superintendents compose the next level of administration. A public relations/ public information director who reports that the superintendent is his or her direct supervisor typically acts in a boundary spanning role and is usually directly attached to the superintendent's office.

The findings that a large majority of respondents report directly to the superintendent, and their input on policy matters is frequently requested, indicates that these school public relations practitioners operate at a level in the district hierarchy at which they would be considered part of the management team. The fact that these same men and women enact the public relations manager's role to differing degrees (as reported in question two) even though comparably placed in the organizational hierarchy, seems cause for further investigation. Dozier and Broom's 1995 study of PRSA members indicates that, with the members of that organization at least, this is not the case.

Question 5 - What areas of concern contribute to school public relations practitioners in this state being satisfied with their jobs?

Overall 84.1% (37) of the respondents indicated they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their jobs. One respondent was "not satisfied" and six (13.6%) had "mixed feelings." There were no significant differences between either the

satisfaction levels of females and males or the areas they indicated contributed to that satisfaction.

Following are the questions posed, and the means for responses (based on a scale where "5" indicated "very important" and "1" indicated "not important") from highest to lowest level of importance: importance of work to district (4.73); contribution to my community (4.67); importance of work to district recognized by superiors (4.49); power to make independent decisions (4.43); freedom to plan department's priorities (4.42); creativity (4.3); salary (4.17); writing (4.14); meeting demands/requests from other department (4.09); producing publications (3.79); and work hours (3.77).

Pincus's findings (1986) that upper management communication had as great an impact on satisfaction as superior-subordinate communication was generally not applicable to this study because respondents indicated their supervisors were top management -- either superintendents or assistant superintendents. Respondents did indicate, however, that their immediate supervisor "gives me freedom to make day-to-day decisions regarding my department" (97.6%), and "supports me in my decisions regarding my department" (97.%). In addition 93.4% responded "I feel my department's contribution to the school district is valued by the superintendent."

We were also interested in Selladurai's 1993 findings which showed educational level and salary had significant effects on school public relations practitioners' general job satisfaction. We found no significant differences based on either salary or educational level, with 84.1% of respondents in the current study reporting themselves to be either "satisfied" or "very satisfied." The salary range of those with "mixed feelings" was between $35,000 and more than $60,000 a year, from which we inferred that factors other than salary were having an impact on the satisfaction level of these individuals. The one person making under $14,999 -- an

administrative receptionist with a high school education -- reported being "very satisfied." Of interest for further research is that no communication majors reported "not satisfied" or "mixed feelings," perhaps implying that educational field of study is also correlated to satisfaction within a public relations position.

The six items that respondents rated as being most important to their satisfaction (all rated more important than salary) were all high on a human needs scale: the importance of their work to the district; contributing to their community; being recognized for the importance of their work; autonomy and independence; decision making power; and creativity. In questions regarding satisfaction with their public relations role, the questions ranked highest were those showing boundary spanning activity, direct connection to upper management and power to act decisively and independently. Although this study does not directly compare those in managerial to those in technician roles, these findings seen to support Broom and Smith's 1979 study that found those in manager roles are more satisfied than those in technical roles.

The importance of the fact that no communication majors reported being less than "satisfied" should not be underestimated by those making hiring decisions. This finding would appear to be a good indication that knowing the requirements of a job before undertaking it goes a long way toward being satisfied with that job.

Question 6 - Is encroachment into the public relations function taking place in school districts in this state?

The study approached the issue of encroachment in several ways. Respondents were asked to indicate their educational background and years of experience in public relations, both in their current and any previous positions. In addition, the instrument addressed respondents' other responsibilities besides the

public relations function. Findings indicate that encroachment into the public relations role in schools is indeed taking place.

Fifteen (34%) of the respondents had degrees in some area of communication, 20 (45.5%) had degrees in education, and seven (15.9%) indicated they had a degree in some other area.

Fifteen of the respondents (34%) had no previous experience in public relations work. Fourteen of that number had degrees in either education (10) or some other field (4). For the remaining 66% of respondents, years of prior experience in communication or public relations ranged from two to 19 years. Ten of the communication majors had between two and seven years experience, and three had 15 years of experience. The person who reported 19 years of prior experience in public relations was an education major and, as discussed earlier in this paper, possibly misunderstood the meaning of the question.

What these findings imply, and subsequent interviews with a school public relations practitioner underscores, is that in school districts in this state, public relations positions and other administrative roles are often filled by teachers who are "promoted out of the classroom" (M. Dillon, Chief Human Resources Services, personal communication, October 9, 1996). A teacher experiencing classroom burnout, or reaching a salary ceiling of the highest pay grade for his or her level of education, will apply for an open administrative position. As in many organizations, an in-house applicant is given priority over someone from outside (M. Dillon, personal communication, October 9, 1996). Often administrative positions are more highly paid than classroom positions, so the movement from education into educational public relations is continual.

Those respondents most likely to state they were not responsible for any other function besides public relations had degrees in communication -- nine of the 15 communication majors, or 60% ($x^2 = 14.03$, $p = .0009$).

Table 3 shows the percentage of time the practitioner spends on public relations activities reported by major field of study.

Percentage of Time Spent on Public Relations Activities Reported by Educational Degree Field

	<10%	10-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%
Comm. (15)	0	1	2	1	2	9
Education (19)	5	9	2	1	1	1
Other (6)	1	1	2	1	0	1

Some respondents did not answer these questions.

The implications of these findings are that only those practitioners with a communications background, and not all of them, are focusing their time primarily on a district's public relations function, including communicating with its community, internal and governmental publics. Following is a partial list of answers to an open-ended question asking what responsibilities the respondents had in addition to public relations activities (some respondents listed more than one): business-industry partnerships, drug-free schools program, guidance and counseling services, adult education/literacy coordinator, technology, parenting courses, curriculum coordinator, grants coordinator, staff development, personnel interviewing, benefits administrator, and the list goes on.

The problem of encroachment into educational public relations is a serious one if the experience in other states is similar to our findings here. In this one southern state 34% of the respondents have no public relations experience and

61.4% have degrees in a field other than communications, thus having no grounding in either public relations theory or practice.

Conclusions

While this study is exploratory, and there is no way of knowing if what we found here is generalizable to school public relations practice in other parts of the country, our findings do give some reason for concern about the way public relations is being practiced in educational settings. Further research which broadens the population of respondents to other areas of the country is indicated to test hypotheses developed here.

The differences seen here between the way men and women enact the public relations manager role, although comparably placed in the organizational hierarchy, may extend beyond the educational setting, and is another area in which we would suggest further research. Our finding that it is management or management-type activities that elicit the most job satisfaction echoes back to the early Broom and Smith (1979) study, and is in opposition to the more recent Broom and Dozier (1986) study which indicated technicians were the most satisfied. Further research is indicated in this area to verify whether this is a trend, or specific to the population studied here.

Finally, additional research in the area of encroachment into the public relations function, specifically in educational settings, is needed. While school districts are indeed "doing more with less," the question of whether diluting the public relations function is successfully stretching resources, or is harming relations with essential publics was beyond the scope of this study and still needs to be answered.

References

Acharya, L. (1981). Effect of perceived environmental uncertainty of public relations roles. Paper presented to the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education. Wisconsin University, Madison, WI.

Brody, E.W. (1985). Changing roles and requirements of public relations. Public Relations Review, 11(4), 22-28.

Broom, G.M. (1982). A comparison of sex roles in public relations. Public Relations Review, 8(3), 17-22.

Broom, G.M. & Dozier, D.M. (1985). Determinants and consequences of public relations roles. Paper presented to the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, TN.

Broom, G.M. & Dozier, D.M. (1986). Advancement for public relations role models. Public Relations Review, 12(1), 37-56.

Childers, L. (1986). Salary and gender: A panel study of male and female public relations practitioners. Unpublished masters thesis, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Creedon, P.J. (1989). The challenge of re-visioning gender values. In P.J. Creedon (Ed.), Women in mass communication: Challenging gender values, 13-33. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H., & Broom, G.M. (1985). Effective Public Relations (6th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Dozier, D.M. (1983). Toward a reconciliation of 'role conflict' in public relations research. Paper presented at the Western Communication Educators Conference, Fullerton, CA.

Dozier, D.M. (1986). The environmental scanning function of public relations practitioners and participation in management decision making. Paper presented to the Public Relations Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, OK.

Dozier, D.M. (1987). Gender, environmental scanning, and participation in management decision making. Paper presented to the Public Relations Interest Group, International Communication Association, Montreal, Canada.

Dozier, D.M. (1988). Breaking public relations' glass ceiling. Public Relations Review, 14(3), 6-14.

Dozier, D.M. (1992). The organizational roles of communications and public relations practitioners. In J. Grunig (Ed.) Excellence in public relations and communication management. 327-355. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Dozier, D.M. & Broom, G. (1995). Evolution of the manager role in public relations practice. Journal of Public Relations Research, 7(1), 2-26.

Ferguson, M.A. (1987). Utility of roles research to corporate communication: Power, leadership and decision-making. Paper presented to the Public Relations Interest Group, International Communication Association, Montreal, Canada.

Foskett, N. (1992). An introduction to the management of external relations in schools. In N. Foskett (Ed.) Managing external relations in schools. 3-19. London: Routledge.

Gainey, B.S. (1985). Analysis of the changing roles and responsibilities of the public school public relations practitioner. Unpublished master's thesis. University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Genzer, S.M. (1993). Actual and ideal workloads of educational public relations directors in the United States. Dissertation Abstracts International, 54, 1610.

Grunig, J.E. & Hunt T. (1984). Managing Public Relations. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Jacobson, D.Y. & Tortorello, N.J. (1992). Seventh annual salary survey. Public Relations Journal, August, 1992, 9-21.

Johnson, D.J. & Acharya, L. (1982). Organizational decision making and public relations roles. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, Athens, OH.

Keiser, D.W. (1994). School public relations programs in selected Wisconsin public school districts. Dissertation Abstracts International. 55, 1155.

Lariscy, R.A., Sallot, L. & Cameron, G.T. (1996). Justice and gender: An instrumental and symbolic explication. Journal of Public Relations Research, 8(2), 107-121.

Lauzen, M. (1990). The effects of gender on professional encroachment. Paper presented to the Public Relations Interest Group, International Communication Association, Dublin, Ireland.

Lauzen, M. (1992). Public relations roles, intraorganizational power, and encroachment. Journal of Public Relations Research, 4(2). 61-80.

Lyster, R.J. (1994). A comparison of the roles and responsibilities of educational public relations directors and community education directors. Dissertation Abstracts International, 56, 419.

Mathews, W. (1988). Women in PR: Progression or retrogression? Public Relations Review, 14(3), 24-28.

McDonald B. & Fryman, J.E. (1992). The roles that Indiana's association public relations practitioners perform and their involvement in the decision-making process. Paper submitted to the Educators Section, Public Relations Society of America, Kansas City, MO.

Pincus, J.D. (1986). Communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and job performance, Human Communication Research, 12, 395-419.

----- (1993). "Q&A : On the roles in PR and the glass ceiling, with San Diego State's Glen M. Broom," Ragan Report, 24 (17).

Reagan, J., Anderson, R., Sumner, J. & Hill, S. (1990). A factor analysis of Broom and Smith's public relations roles scale. Journalism Quarterly, 67(1), 177-183.

----- (July, 1993). Schools: Staffing in the United States. A Statistical Profile 1990-91. Sharon A. Bobbitt (Ed.) U.S. Department of Education, Office of Research: Washington, D.C.

Selladurai, R.S. (1993). Job characteristics affecting the job satisfaction of public relations directors. Dissertation Abstracts International, 54, 1875.

Toth, E.L. (1988). Making peace with gender issues in public relations. Public Relations Review, 14(3), 36-47.

Weaver-Lariscy, Cameron, G.T. & Sweep, D.D. (1994). Women in higher education public relations: An inkling of change? Journal of Public Relations Research, 6(2), 125-140.

West, P.T. (1985). Educational Public Relations. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage.